



Department
for Education

Further Education and Skills, England: July 2020



16 July 2020

This release includes summary statistics from two previously standalone publications - Further Education (FE) and Skills in England, and Apprenticeships and Traineeships in England, and contains provisional figures for the first three quarters of the 2019/20 academic year (August 2019 to April 2020)¹.

These statistics have been combined into one document following changes we have introduced to our apprenticeship releases since April 2020 to make them more relevant in light of the COVID-19 pandemic. Please see the section on changes included in this release (page 8) for more information.

Impact of COVID-19 on reporting of FE and apprenticeship data

In the May update to our Apprenticeship and Traineeships release we noted the potential impact of COVID-19 on apprenticeship data and reporting, which extends to wider FE, please see the following link for more information and caveats on interpreting the data: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships-may-2020>.

The 2019/20 in-year figures in this release are referred to as 'reported so far' or 'reported to date' to reflect that they are provisional and subject to change. More accurate comparisons can be made once final returns for the academic year are available, which are due to be returned to Department for Education in October 2020 and published in November 2020.

We continue to seek user feedback on the type of breakdowns of most use during this period, such as national apprenticeship starts by age, level and individual standard etc, so we can consider going forward and in light of data quality assessments.

1. Summary statistics

Apprenticeships

Starts (FE & skills table 2 ²)	<p>Latest³ figures for the first three quarters of the 2019/20 academic year (August 2019 to April 2020) show:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Apprenticeship starts reported to date were 271,900 The proportion of starts by level was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Intermediate level: 31.8 per cent (86,400) Advanced level: 43.7 per cent (118,800)⁴ Higher level: 24.5 per cent (66,700) Of the higher level starts, 26,200 were at levels 6 and 7
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¹ Previous quarterly releases can be found here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr>. We plan to publish end-of-year FE and Skills, and Apprenticeships and Traineeships releases in November 2020.

² See section 2 for a list of tables in this release. The starts since May 2010 and since May 2015 figures and Level 6+ starts can be found in the associated tables here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/fe-data-library-apprenticeships>.

³ Headline apprenticeship starts figures are the same as those published in the monthly June 2020 release, however, this July quarterly release covers further breakdowns along with wider FE data. See the June monthly release here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships-june-2020>

⁴ The proportion of starts at intermediate or advanced level was 75.5 per cent (205,200)

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The proportion of starts by age group was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> 16-18: 25.7 per cent (69,900) 19-24: 29.6 per cent (80,500) 25 and over: 44.7 per cent (121,400) There have been 2,160,600 apprenticeship starts since May 2015 and 4,538,100 starts since May 2010.
Standards (FE & skills table 2)	<p>75.0 per cent of all starts were on apprenticeship standards (203,800) in the first three quarters of 2019/20.</p> <p>There have now been 644,900 starts on apprenticeship standards since their introduction in September 2014.</p>
Levy supported starts (FE & skills table 2)	<p>The proportion of starts supported by Apprenticeship Service Account (ASA) levy funds⁵ was 67.0 per cent (182,200).</p>
BAME and LDD (FE data library ⁶)	<p>13.1 per cent of apprenticeships starts were by individuals from a Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic (BAME) group in the first three quarters of 2019/20 (34,700)⁷.</p> <p>12.6 per cent of apprenticeship starts were by individuals who reported having a learning difficulty and/or disability (LDD) in the first three quarters of 2019/20 (33,300)⁸.</p>
Achievements (FE & skills table 2)	<p>Apprenticeship achievements reported to date were 99,800.</p>
Participation (FE & skills table 1)	<p>Apprenticeship participation figures reported to date were 685,700⁹.</p>

⁵ During this reporting period a small number of apprentices employed by organisations that do not pay the levy were funded using the apprenticeship service system. The service was extended to all employers that do not pay the levy to register and reserve funds on 9 January 2020.

⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fe-data-library>. The percentage calculation for the BAME and LDD measures here are based on excluding instances of unknown ethnicity and unknown learning difficulty/disability. The figures shown for 2018/19 also have this approach.

⁷ In 2018/19 full year, 12.5 per cent of apprenticeships were started by individuals from the BAME group. BAME proportions can vary throughout the year, so care should be taken in comparing with previous years' full year data or when making in-year comparisons to earlier years.

⁸ In 2018/19 full year, 12.0 per cent of apprenticeships were started by individuals who reported having some form of LDD. LDD proportions can vary throughout the year, so care should be taken in comparing with previous years' full year data or when making in-year comparisons.

⁹ Participation counts the number of people who have attended one day or more on a learning aim in the given academic year (both new starters and those continuing from the previous academic year). As the latest academic year covers August 2019 to April 2020, this will include people who have attended one day or more on a learning aim at any point in almost eight months of the academic year prior to the nation-wide lockdown due to the coronavirus pandemic and does not measure those in learning currently.

By the end of the second quarter (covering August to January) there were 627,700 learners participating on an apprenticeship, reported to date in the March release:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/875232/Further-education-and-skills-March-2020-main-tables.xlsx.

ILR administrative data

We publish a high volume of FE statistics using provisional, in year data and use latest data as soon as available despite not being 'final'. This enables us to provide the earliest picture of FE performance and allows users to assess the impact of government-funded provision and hold the 'system' to account.

However, it should be noted that the ILR is an administrative data collection system designed primarily for operational use in order to fund training providers for learners in FE and on apprenticeship programmes. Therefore, there are important limitations for users to be aware of and consider when producing analysis and making in year comparisons, such as:

- in year data returns being subject to later revisions
- different proportions being observed during the year for e.g. learner characteristics such as ethnicity
- some in year returns being more robust/reliable than others due to completeness of information at the time of the return, particularly for returns in the early in the year
- provider reporting behaviour changing from one year to the next, e.g. in how timely they make they make returns

The fact that providers can submit data for earlier periods in later data returns can lead to 'data lag'. This highlights that the ILR does not provide 'real time' data, i.e. data returns provide information about the most recent month, but providers may not necessarily include latest information on their learners straight away, which delays finalising information until final, end of data is returned each autumn.

The examples above can lead to differences between real world events and what can be understood from the ILR. This includes the need to make accurate data returns to support financial claims which may not provide the insight needed to fully understand what is happening on the ground such as learners being subject to short periods of suspended training and/or providers and employers continuing training programmes through the use of distance learning, as may be happening currently in some instances as a result of current COVID-19 pandemic. Additionally, there could also be different levels of intensity of training currently, e.g. some learners might be continuing but in a reduced capacity which might not be being captured, pending a return to 'normal' circumstances.

Provider reporting during the period affected by COVID-19

The latest data in this publication includes data relating to the period affected by COVID-19 and the nationwide lockdown, i.e. from March 2020 onwards (note: the UK lockdown was announced on 23 March so is likely to have impacted on, for example, apprenticeships starts in the last week of March). Therefore, extra care should be taken in comparing and interpreting data presented in this release.

It may be possible that the pandemic has affected provider behaviour in terms of the reporting of FE and apprenticeship learning during the affected period, and this could vary by provider. For example, some providers may have been unable to make returns due to the lockdown, or if they have made returns, these could be of variable completeness. Some providers may even return more timely and accurate returns than usual at this point in the year for funding purposes.

The furlough scheme may also have impacted on how aspects of ILR data are currently being recorded, such as how the 'learning status' of a learner has been captured, e.g. whether a learner is currently recorded as a continuing learner or whether they are being recorded as being on a break in learning while still being with an employer. Such information may not be finalised until the final end of year ILR data return in autumn 2020.

Caveats on making in year comparisons

Comparisons of learner characteristics using in-year data are less reliable than using full-year final data. In year data when first reported is provisional and subject to revisions as providers continue to record data for earlier periods in later collections of the ILR. The difference between provisional and final figures can also vary throughout the year and between years, as can the proportion of learner characteristics as noted previous releases:

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/879208/March2020_apprenticeships-and-traineeships.pdf. Such variation can be caused by changes to the mix of provision between years.

Additional care should be taken in comparing in-year data with equivalent periods in previous years and interpreting overall change given the effect of COVID-19.

Impact of the apprenticeship levy

As of May 2017, reforms have been made to how apprenticeship funding works, including the introduction of the apprenticeship levy and apprenticeship service. The profile of apprenticeship starts changed significantly since the introduction of the levy which, along with the introduction of apprenticeship standards (that are replacing frameworks), has impacted on the number and nature of apprenticeship starts and participation.

Traineeship starts (FE & skills table 3)

Latest figures for the first three quarters of the 2019/20 academic year show that:

- 11,000 traineeship starts were reported
- Under 19s account for 77.2 per cent of traineeship starts (8,500 starts).

The next update for traineeship completion and conversion rates is planned for November 2020. Latest completion rates can be found in the March 2020 release (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-march-2020>), and latest conversion rates can be found in the November 2019 release (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-november-2019>).

Adult FE (including apprenticeships)

Adult (19+) FE and skills (including apprenticeships) (FE & skills table 4)	<p>1,624,200 learners aged 19 and over participated in government-funded further education in the first three quarters of 2019/20.</p> <p>461,900 participated on English and Maths courses; 520,800 on a Level 2 course (175,000 were Full Level 2); 382,700 on a Level 3 course (326,600 were Full Level 3); 161,600 participated on a Level 4 or above course.</p> <p>713,900 achievements in FE and skills were reported in the first three quarters of 2019/20.</p> <p>949,500 learners funded by the Adult Education Budget¹⁰ (AEB) participated in the first three quarters of 2019/20.</p> <p>550,800 achievements in further education and skills were funded through the AEB in the first three quarters of 2019/20.</p>
English and maths (FE & skills table 7)	<p>461,900 adult learners participated on English and maths courses in the first three quarters of 2019/20.</p> <p>275,000 learners participated on an English course; 281,600 learners participated on a Maths course; 115,000 learners participated on an English for Speakers of Other Languages (ESOL) course.</p> <p>Achievements in English and maths reported to date was 142,600.</p>
Education and Training (excluding apprenticeships) (FE & skills table 5)	<p>799,900 adult learners participated in Education and Training in the first three quarters of 2019/20.</p> <p>340,800 adult achievements in Education and Training in the first three quarters of 2019/20.</p>
Community learning	<p>331,900 learners participated on a Community Learning course in the first three quarters of 2019/20.</p>

¹⁰ The scope of adult skills funding has changed over the years to reflect funding settlements. For many years there were separate funding lines for offender learning and Community Learning and the previously named Adult Skills Budget, which included funding for apprenticeships (19+). In addition, a separate funding line was introduced for advanced learner loans. However, more recently both the budget and responsibility for delivery of offender learning transferred to the Ministry of Justice (in October 2016) and since the introduction of the apprenticeship levy (in May 2017), apprenticeships (19+) are no longer included. From 2016/17, the AEB has covered adult (19+) non apprenticeship learning (excluding advanced learner loans), Community Learning and 19-24 traineeships.

265,700 took a Personal and Community Development Learning course;
26,200 took a Neighbourhood Learning in Deprived Communities course;
18,700 took a Family English, Maths and Language course;
28,400 took a Wider Family Learning course.

Achievements in community learning reported to date was 256,100.

Analysis of learners with planned end dates from the start of COVID-19 lockdown to the end of 2019/20 – apprenticeships

The following tables provide breakdowns of apprenticeship learners expected to finish their learning in 2019/20 from the start of the lockdown, i.e. based on planned end dates from 23 March 2020 to 31 July 2020 by learner characteristics (e.g. ethnicity, gender etc), and also by sector subject area, level and standard/framework. These data provide an overview of the total number of learners who could be subject to alternate assessment methods for achievement. They have therefore not been adjusted for where they have subsequently been reported as a break in learning or a withdrawal on the ILR.

Learner characteristics <small>(supplementary table on characteristics of apprentices and apprenticeships in 2019/20 potentially affected by the 2020 Coronavirus restrictions)</small>	<p>69,030 learners were participating on an apprenticeship in March 2020, with a planned end date between 23 March 2020 (when COVID-19 lockdown measures began) and the end of the 2019/20 academic year (31 July 2020)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proportion of these learners by age-group was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Under 19: 14.2 per cent (9,820) ○ 19-24: 35.1 per cent (24,240) ○ 25 and over: 50.7 per cent (34,970) • Female apprentices account for 51.4 per cent (35,490) • Those with a learning difficulty and/or disability account for 11.7 per cent (7,860) • BAME learners account for 13.0 per cent (8,840)
Sector subject area and level <small>(supplementary table on characteristics of apprentices and apprenticeships in 2019/20 potentially affected by the 2020 Coronavirus restrictions)</small>	<p>Of the 69,030 apprenticeships with a planned end date in the same period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proportion by level was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Intermediate: 36.3 per cent (25,050) ○ Advanced: 48.4 per cent (33,410) ○ Higher: 15.3 per cent (10,580). ○ Level 6 and above: 1.9 per cent (1,340) • Apprenticeship standards account for 59.2 per cent (40,890) • The four largest sector subject areas were: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Business, administration and law: 29.5 per cent (20,370) ○ Health, public service and care: 27.2 per cent (18,800) ○ Engineering and manufacturing technologies: 13.6 per cent (9,380) ○ Retail and commercial enterprise: 12.2 per cent (8,440)

Analysis of learners with planned end dates from the start of COVID-19 lockdown to the end of 2019/20 – Education & Training

The following tables provide breakdowns of learners participating in Education and Training provision and that are expected to finish their learning in 2019/20 from the start of the lockdown, i.e. based on planned end dates from 23 March 2020 to 31 July 2020 by learner characteristics (e.g. ethnicity, gender etc), and also by sector subject area, level and qualification type. These data provide an overview of the total number of Education and Training learners and learning aims that could be subject to alternate assessment methods for achievement. They have therefore not been adjusted for where they have subsequently been reported as a break in learning or a withdrawal on the ILR.

Learner characteristics <small>(supplementary table on characteristics of adult (19+) Education and training learner and learning aim participation in 2019/20 potentially affected by the 2020 Coronavirus restrictions)</small>	<p>376,880 adult learners were participating in Education and Training in March 2020, with a planned end date between 23 March 2020 (when COVID-19 lockdown measures began) and the end of the 2019/20 academic year (31 July 2020)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The proportion of these learners by age-group was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 19-24: 26.9 per cent (101,540) ○ 25-34: 27.8 per cent (104,810) ○ 35-44: 24.7 per cent (93,230) ○ 45-59: 17.2 per cent (64,950) ○ 60 and above: 3.3 per cent (12,360) • Females account for 67.8 per cent (255,360) • Those with a learning difficulty and/or disability account for 22.3 per cent (82,160) • BAME learners account for 39.9 per cent (145,670)
Sector subject area and level <small>(supplementary table on characteristics of adult (19+) Education and training learner and learning aim participation in 2019/20 potentially affected by the 2020 Coronavirus restrictions)</small>	<p>Of the 376,880 adult learners in Education and Training with a planned end date in the same period:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The number of learners by level was: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Below Level 2 (excluding English and maths): 70,060 ○ English and maths: 179,430 ○ Level 2: 163,800 ○ Level 3: 62,420 ○ Level 4 and above: 4,710 <p>Of the 539,830 learning aims taken by these learners, the largest sector subject areas were:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Preparation for life and work (268,080) ○ Health, public service and care (68,570) ○ Science and mathematics (33,750)

Certificates Awarded for Apprenticeship Standards (Official Statistics)

Apprenticeship standards are made up of two elements; the training element which is delivered by a training provider, and the end-point assessment which is the undertaken by the End-point Assessment Organisation (EPAO).

The purpose of the end-point assessment (EPA) is to test that an apprentice is fully capable of doing their job before they receive their apprenticeship certificate. It also helps to demonstrate that what an apprentice has learned can be applied in the real world.

A certificate for the achievement of an apprenticeship standard is awarded following the apprentice's endpoint assessment (EPA). The EPAO submits the request for the certificate through the Record Apprentice End-point Assessment Grade (RAEAG) service, which is the digital service for recording and submitting requests for certificates for apprenticeship standards.

As part of the service EPAOs are required to record the achievement date for the apprentice to be printed on the certificate. This is the date the end-point assessment is completed and passed.

The achievement date recorded by the EPAO in the service may be different to the apprenticeship achievement date collected via the ILR that training providers submit to the ESFA. This may be due to delays in the achievement being communicated to training providers or in them recording it in the ILR. The RAEAG service also records achievement for non (government)-funded apprentices whose details may not be recorded in the ILR.

Due to differences in the timing of when data is recorded and potential differences in coverage, the number of awards may be larger than the ILR achievements data as reported in this release covering the same period. ILR achievements for 2019/20 will increase with later returns from providers and will become more aligned with awards in the full, final year data for 2019/20

Table 1 shows the number of certificates issued since 1 January 2017 with achievement dates to the end of April 2020, using data from RAEAG as at 8 June 2020. Table 2 shows monthly breakdowns of awards in the 2019/20 academic year (to May 2020), where it can be seen that awards in April and May 2020 (the full months since the introduction of lockdown restrictions in March) are lower than the preceding months.

Table 1: Certificates awarded for apprenticeship standards by level and academic year

		Number of certificates awarded since January 2017				
Level	Grade awarded	2016/17 (Jan - Jul)	2017/18 (Aug - Jul)	2018/19 (Aug - Jul)	2019/20 reported to date (Aug - Apr)	Total certificates since Jan 17
Intermediate	Distinction	80	440	3,190	4,510	8,220
	Merit	-	20	1,310	1,660	2,990
	Pass	40	1,020	6,270	8,040	15,380
	Other	-	-	-	-	10
	Total	130	1,480	10,770	14,220	26,590
Advanced	Distinction	30	260	5,080	7,930	13,300
	Merit	-	60	1,350	3,180	4,590
	Pass	130	700	6,120	10,040	16,990
	Other	-	70	270	160	490
	Total	160	1,090	12,810	21,300	35,370
Higher	Distinction	10	90	940	2,090	3,130
	Merit	-	80	480	1,320	1,880
	Pass	-	260	1,480	3,630	5,360
	Other	-	-	10	80	100
	Total	10	430	2,920	7,110	10,470
All apprenticeships	Distinction	120	790	9,210	14,530	24,650
	Merit	10	150	3,140	6,150	9,450
	Pass	170	1,980	13,870	21,710	37,730
	Other	-	70	280	240	590
	Total	300	2,990	26,500	42,630	72,420

Table 2: Certificates awarded in 2019/20 by level and month - August 19 to May 20 (reported to date)

Level	Grade awarded	Number of certificates awarded in 2019/20									
		Aug-19	Sep-19	Oct-19	Nov-19	Dec-19	Jan-20	Feb-20	Mar-20	Apr-20	May-20
Intermediate	Distinction	460	490	660	670	510	620	580	440	80	60
	Merit	160	150	200	220	170	250	200	230	90	70
	Pass	820	960	1,160	1,110	790	1,080	980	930	220	140
	Other	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
	Total	1,440	1,600	2,020	2,000	1,470	1,950	1,760	1,600	390	260
Advanced	Distinction	880	790	870	930	900	950	940	1,030	640	470
	Merit	260	290	340	420	350	460	370	430	260	120
	Pass	1,140	950	1,240	980	1,360	1,130	1,230	1,120	890	440
	Other	10	20	20	20	20	10	-	10	40	50
	Total	2,290	2,060	2,460	2,360	2,630	2,550	2,540	2,590	1,830	1,070
Higher	Distinction	160	240	250	230	220	220	220	350	200	140
	Merit	70	170	130	200	160	130	110	210	140	50
	Pass	310	270	370	730	530	400	300	350	370	270
	Other	10	-	20	10	20	10	-	10	-	-
	Total	560	680	760	1,170	920	760	630	910	710	460
All apprenticeships	Distinction	1,510	1,520	1,770	1,830	1,630	1,800	1,740	1,820	920	670
	Merit	490	610	670	840	670	830	680	870	500	240
	Pass	2,270	2,180	2,760	2,820	2,680	2,620	2,510	2,400	1,480	840
	Other	20	30	40	30	40	20	-	20	40	50
	Total	4,290	4,340	5,240	5,530	5,020	5,260	4,930	5,110	2,930	1,790

Notes for tables 1 and 2:

- (1) Volumes have been rounded to the nearest ten, with “-” representing fewer than 5 awards.
- (2) One certificate has an achievement date prior to 1st January 2017; all other certificates have achievement dates between March 2017 and April 2020.
- (2) ‘Other’ includes awards where there was a credit or where no grade was awarded.
- (3) ‘Pass’ includes awards where there was a pass awarded or where the award was a pass with excellence.
- (4) EPAOs may not submit requests for certificates until their internal moderation and governance processes have been completed. This may result in a gap between the achievement and submission date, meaning awards shown here may be subject to future revisions. There could be a further impact here with reporting being affected by the nationwide lockdown due to COVID-19.
- (5) Data has been captured since 1 January 2017 when the ESFA took over the responsibility for the operational delivery of certificates for apprenticeship standards.
- (6) A small number of duplicate certificates may be included in these figures.

About this release

Further education and skills

This statistical release presents information for the 2019/20 academic year, covering August 2019 to April 2020 on:

- Adult (aged 19+) government-funded further education (excluding schools and higher education) comprising:
 - Education and training
 - Apprenticeships
 - English and maths
 - Community learning
 - Traineeships (16-24)
- All age (16+) apprenticeships in England.

Changes included in this release

For planned changes to the next release, see ‘changes in the next release’ section.

We have repurposed this release to report on new tables as below:

- new tables for ‘apprenticeships’ and also on ‘education and training’ separately showing information on learners we expect to finish their learning in 2019/20 from the start of the nationwide lockdown due to COVID-19, i.e. 23 March to 31st July 2020, including various breakdowns of their characteristics such as ethnicity, gender and also by sector subject area, level, and qualification type.
- additional detailed underlying data for achievements in FE and skills (including apprenticeships)

Changes in the next release

The DfE is changing how we release our statistics to further modernise our approach to dissemination. This will be through a new DfE statistics dissemination platform known as 'Explore Education Statistics' (EES) to make our data and statistics easier to find, access, navigate and understand. Please see here for more information:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-education/about/statistics>

We are hoping to move to the new platform as soon as possible in 2020 but cannot confirm this yet.

The EES system offers a step change for users in making data and releases easier to find and through use of a new table tool, giving more interactive access to our data. We are also adopting a more concise and user-friendly presentation of commentary and headline data. In addition, the move to EES will, over time, make production and dissemination of statistical releases more efficient and flexible.

We will also seek to improve navigation to our data by consolidating releases and providing more seamless links to all supporting tables. In EES we hope to have two releases: a Further education and skills release, and an Apprenticeships and traineeships release. The latter will bring all apprenticeship data together in one place and update relevant sections on a monthly, quarterly and annual basis. For example, the next update of progress towards the public sector apprenticeships target is planned to be in November 2020.

We are looking to run webinars on the new EES release via sector bodies before launch.

There will be on-going developments to the platform over time as well as how we use it to release our statistics, therefore we would welcome feedback on what users find helpful or not

The next FE and Skills release will be in November 2020 and will provide final full year data for the 2019 to 2020 academic year.

In this publication

Further education and skills

The following tables are included in this release:

- National tables (Excel .xls):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr>

- Supplementary tables and data tools (Excel .xls):

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fe-data-library>

- Underlying comma separated value (CSV) datasets along with metadata

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr>

Please see the 'Accompanying tables' section below for the full list of supplementary tables and data tools published with this release including the csv files.

The User Guide document published alongside the March release provides information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-march-2020>

Methodology and technical information

As with many policy areas, further education is a broad and changing topic. In order to understand the impact of policy and methodology changes on any data published in this release, details are provided in the User Guide document that accompanies the March release: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-march-2020>

Please see the User Guide to FE and Skills Statistics that accompanies this release for links to data for Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-march-2020>

Feedback

For any queries relating to changes we are planning to make to how we publish our data and statistics, please contact: FE.OFFICIALSTATISTICS@education.gov.uk.

2. Accompanying tables

A list of tables published as part of this release can be found here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/announcements/further-education-and-skills-july-2020>

The following tables are available in Excel and Open Data Source (ODS) format here:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr>.

FE and skills tables:

1. All age apprenticeship participation by level and age (2010/11 to 2019/20 reported to date)
- 2.1. All age apprenticeship programme starts by level and age (2010/11 to 2019/20 reported to date)
- 2.2. All age apprenticeship programme achievements by level and age (2010/11 to 2019/20 reported to date)
3. Traineeship starts by age (2013/14 to 2019/20 reported to date)
- 4.1. Adult (19+) FE and Skills participation by level (2010/11 to 2019/20 reported to date)
- 4.2. Adult (19+) FE and Skills achievement by level (2010/11 to 2019/20 reported to date)
- 5.1. Adult (19+) Education and Training participation by level (2010/11 to 2019/20 reported to date)
- 5.2. Adult (19+) Education and Training achievement by level (2010/11 to 2019/20 reported to date)
- 6.1. Adult (19+) AEB funded participation by level (2016/17 to 2019/20 reported to date)
- 6.2. Adult (19+) AEB funded achievement by level (2016/17 to 2019/20- reported to date)
7. Adult (19+) FE and Skills: English and maths participation and achievement by level (2010/11 to 2019/20 reported to date)
8. Community Learning participation and achievement by type (2010/11 to 2019/20 reported to date)

Underlying CSV data

- Unrounded CSV dataset on apprenticeship starts with various attributes such as gender, geography, sector subject area and provider (2019/20 - reported to date)
- Rounded CSV dataset on apprenticeship starts and achievement learner demographics, sector subject area and local authority district (2019/20 - reported to date)
- Unrounded CSV dataset on apprenticeship participation with various attributes such as gender, geography and provider, (2019/20 - reported to date).
- Unrounded CSV apprenticeship achievements by SSA, provider, framework/standard, local authority district (2019/20 - reported to date)
- Unrounded CSV dataset on apprenticeship starts and achievements by LEP (2019/20 - reported to date).
- Unrounded CSV dataset on Further Education and Skills learner participation with various attributes such as gender, geography and provider (2019/20 - reported to date).
- Unrounded CSV dataset on Further Education and Skills aims enrolments with various attributes such as gender, geography, sector subject area and provider (2019/20 - reported to date).
- Unrounded CSV dataset on Further Education and Skills aims achievements with various attributes such as gender, geography, sector subject area and provider (2019/20 - reported to date).
- Metadata: Information about the fields in the underlying data and additional notes for users

Supplementary tables

Please see the **table finder** tool published in the FE data library for further supplementary data tools and tables published along with this release: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/fe-data-library-help-for-finding-data>

1. Apprenticeship demographic and sector subject area PivotTable tool: starts and achievements (2019/20 reported to date)
2. Education and training enrolments and achievements by sector subject area and delivery location, (2019/20 reported to date)
3. Apprenticeship starts since 2010 and 2015

4. Education and training and community learning participation for active MCAs and GLA, 2019/20 reported to date
5. Characteristics of apprentices and apprenticeships in 2019/20 potentially affected by the 2020 Coronavirus restrictions.
6. Characteristics of adult (19+) Education and training learner and learning aim participation in 2019/20 potentially affected by the 2020 Coronavirus restrictions.

When reviewing the FE and Skills tables, please note that:

We preserve confidentiality	The Code of Practice for Official Statistics (https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/monitoring-and-assessment/code-of-practice/) requires us to take reasonable steps to ensure that our published or disseminated statistics protect confidentiality.
We suppress some figures	In the main tables, headline volumes below 50 are suppressed (this includes values of zero). In the supplementary tables volumes below 5 are suppressed (this includes values of zero). A percentage of less than 0.5 per cent is suppressed.
We adopt symbols to help identify suppression	Symbols are used in the tables as follows: ‘-’ indicates a headline volume with below 50 in the main tables and below 5 in the supplementary tables. ‘*’ indicates a percentage of less than 0.5 per cent.
We round figures	In the main tables, headline volumes are reported rounded to the nearest 100. In the supplementary tables, volumes are rounded to the nearest 10. There may be exceptions to this in instances where any figure that is an exact duplicate of a value in the headline figures (e.g. Grand Totals), which are rounded to the nearest 100 and avoid contradictory figures. Percentages reported are calculated on pre-rounded data and given to one decimal place.
Coverage of the data	This release includes provisional data for the first three quarters of the 2019/20 academic year (August 2019 to April 2020) reported to the Education and Skills Funding Agency in June 2020 by further education providers.

3. Further information is available

Additional breakdowns of FE statistics are published online as supplementary tables. These include breakdowns by age, gender, ethnicity, learners with learning difficulties and/or disabilities, region, local authority, parliamentary constituency, sector subject area and funding stream.

Please see the FE data library here: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/fe-data-library>

For further information on the monthly Apprenticeship Service data, please see the main text that accompanied the June release: <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/apprenticeships-and-traineeships-june-2020>

4. The apprenticeship funding system

Changes in the way apprenticeship funding works were introduced and implemented from May 2017. Guidance about these changes and paying the apprenticeship levy can be found at this link:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work/apprenticeship-levy-how-it-will-work>.

A key aspect of these changes was the introduction of the apprenticeship service, an online service to allow employers to choose and pay for apprenticeship training more easily. Levy-payers are able to register on the apprenticeship service so that they can:

1. receive levy funds to spend on apprenticeships
2. manage their apprentices
3. pay their training provider

5. Technical information

For technical information, please see the User Guide document that accompanied the March release:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/further-education-and-skills-march-2020>

This provides further information on the data sources, their coverage and quality and explains the methodology used in producing the data, including how it is validated and processed.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/further-education-and-skills-statistical-first-release-sfr>

6. National Statistics

National Statistics status means that our statistics meet the highest standards of trustworthiness, quality and public value, and it is our responsibility to maintain compliance with these standards.

The continued designation of these statistics as National Statistics was confirmed in October 2019 following a compliance check by the Office for Statistics Regulation (<https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/correspondence/compliance-check-further-education-skills/>).

The statistics last underwent a full assessment (https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/12/images-assessment-report-78-further-education-and-skills_tcm97-35239.pdf, <https://www.statisticsauthority.gov.uk/publication/statistics-on-further-education-and-skills-letter-of-confirmation-as-national-statistics/>) against the [Code of Practice](#) in 2010 and designation as National Statistics were confirmed in 2012.

Since the latest review by the Office for Statistics Regulation, we have continued to comply with the Code of Practice for Statistics, and have made the following improvements:

We highlighted the key methodology information in the User Guide to FE and Skills Statistics accompanying the March 2020 release, including data quality issues surrounding the in-year data in our releases, and ensured our in-year statistics are now clearly caveated. We have improved the commentary with the necessary caveats to aid interpretation and to visually reflect the variability with in-year statistics. We made a number of changes to our publication structure and publication timings from January 2018, which were outlined in the [Proposed Changes](#) document in November 2017. We have responded to various user needs by creating more data tools with the view to improving the richness of data, increasing efficiencies, and enabling re-use of those statistics, thereby improving flexibility of the statistics. We have developed a new table finder to help users navigate the tools in the FE data library. These changes,

particularly those implemented from the 2017/18 academic year were informed by user feedback, an internal review of further education Official Statistics, and departmental priorities, with a view to improving consistency across our statistical publications. Furthermore, [the FE Official Statistics mailbox](#) has been introduced as the central point of contact for further engagement and to invite feedback.

The Department has a set of [statistical policies](#) in line with the Code of Practice for Official Statistics.

Certificates awarded for apprenticeship standards are classified as official statistics and have been produced in line with the Code of Practice for Statistics but have not been designated as National Statistics by the United Kingdom Statistics Authority.

7. Get in touch

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Department
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